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ACTION COMICS



RUCKA
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LOIS LANE:
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**CAPTAIN
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THE HUMANS HAVE AN ABUNDANCE OF FAULTS.

ON A GENETIC LEVEL, THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM AND THEIR SIMIAN FOREBEARERS ARE ALMOST UNDETECTABLE.

THEIR LANGUAGE IS PRIMITIVE, LACKING THE MATHEMATICAL PRECISION OF MY NATIVE TONGUE.

FOR ALL THEIR FLAWS, THEY DO POSSESS ONE REMARKABLE GIFT.

BUT WITH THIS CRUDE TOOL, THEY HAVE A GIFT FOR CAPTURING UNIVERSAL TRUTH IN THE SIMPLEST OF PHRASES.

...DON'T BE SCARED.

IT'S GONS TO BE ALL RIGHT. IT'S GONS TO BE...

THEY'RE WEAK AND FRAGILE, AND INDESCRIBABLY IGNORANT.

THARA?

I'M HERE.

I KNOW.

TRY TO RELAX. WE'LL FIGURE THIS OUT, CHRIS.

FOR EXAMPLE: "ALL GOOD THINGS COME TO HE WHO WAITS."

WE'LL FIX THIS.

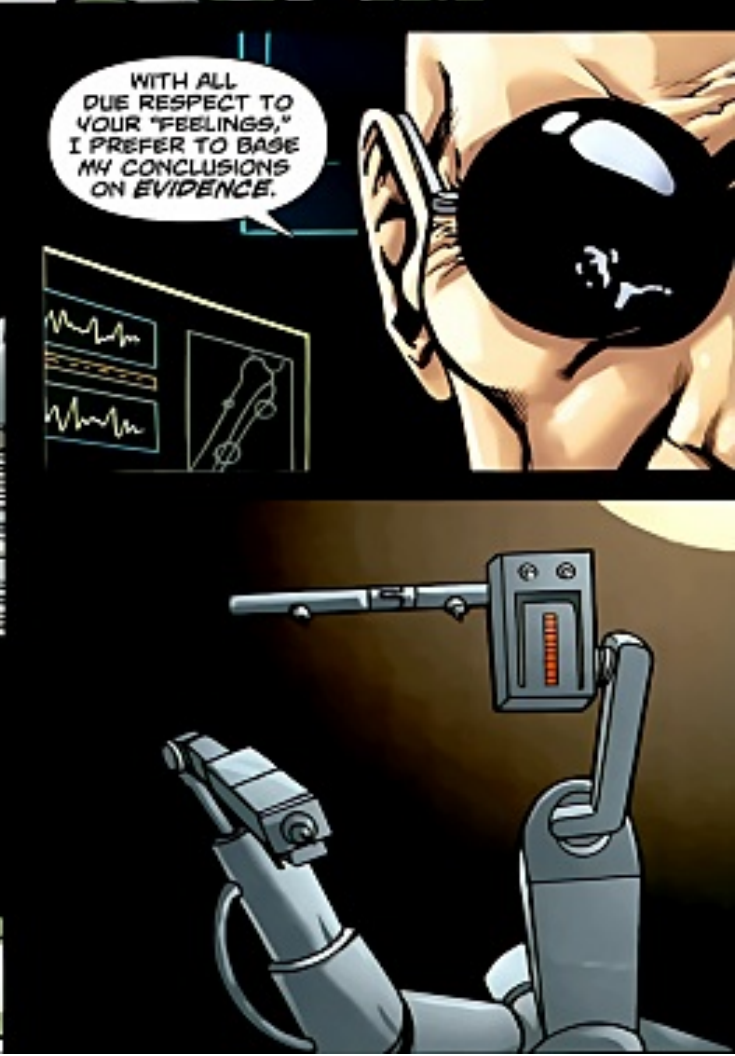
WE'LL CERTAINLY TRY.

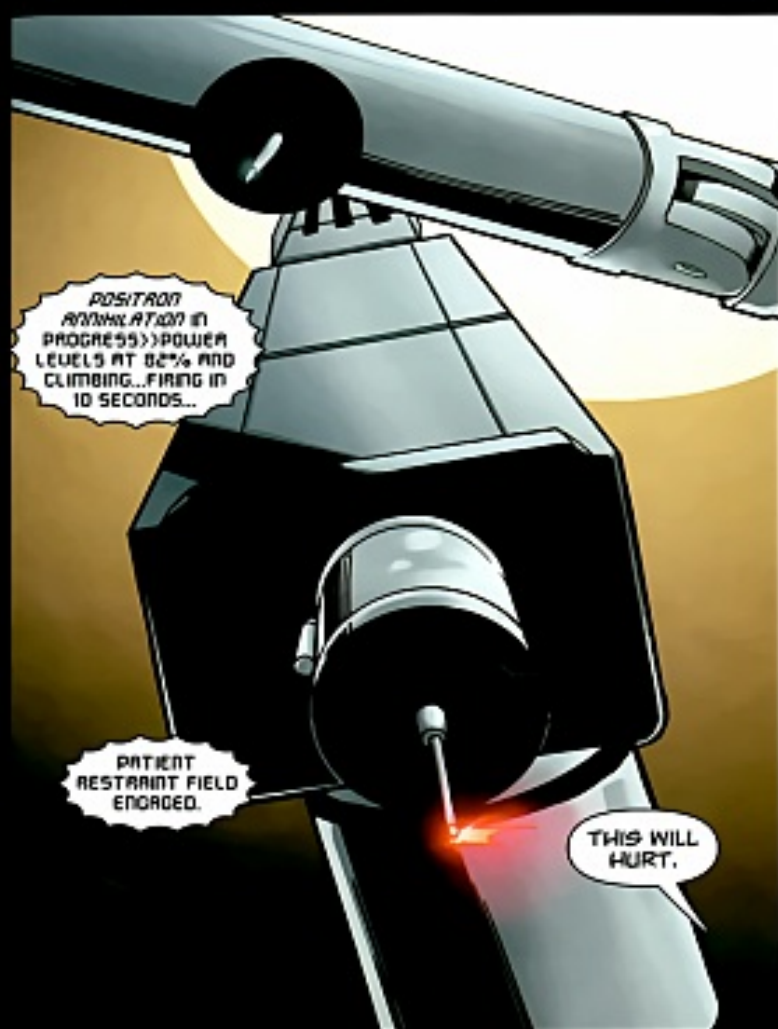
DR. PILLINGS IS ONE OF S.T.A.R. LABS' BEST XENOGENETICISTS.

IF ANYONE CAN FIGURE THIS OUT, HE CAN.

YOU HEAR THAT? YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS.

AND I HAVE WAITED SO VERY LONG.





IT'S
THEATER.

IN MY OWN LAB,
TRACKING DOWN AND
COUNTERACTING THE
PHANTOM ZONE'S
UNIQUE EFFECTS ON
THE SUBJECT WOULD
BE CHILD'S PLAY.

NNNNNGH!

DIVINE SPARK

PART 2

FROM THE MISTS OF
LOST HAVEN, STORIES
ARE TOLD OF TWO MYTHICAL
HEROES WHO TIME AND TIME
AGAIN ROSE TO PROTECT
THEIR PEOPLE FROM
TYRANNY AND
TERROR.

NIGHTWING
PART 2
FLAMBERBIRD

GREG RUCKA and ERIC TRAUTMANN: Writers

PERE PÉREZ: Penciller - BIT: Inker

JAVIER MENA: Colorist - ROB LEIGH: Letterer

CAFU with SANTIAGO ARCAS: Cover

WIL MOSS: Asst. Editor - MATT IDELSON: Editor

SUPERMAN
created by
Jerry Siegel
and Joe
Shuster

BUT APPEARANCES MUST BE
MAINTAINED. LIKE THE RUPE
OF MY "BLINDNESS," OR MY
"KRYPTONIAN SYMPATHIES."

"DR. FILLINGS"—THE PURE
SCIENTIST WHO ESCHES
POLITICS, AND CARES ONLY FOR
SCIENCE--WILL "STRUGGLE" TO
SAVE THE "POOR BOY."

GgGgGk

GARG

KAS

AND ALL THE
WHILE, MY OWN
EXPERIMENT RUNS
ITS COURSE.



THE DAILY PLANET.

...PENTAGON
BUT NO REPORT--

...ABOUT THE
MILITARY BUILD-UP
AROUND
MARKOVIA?

--GET
A COMMENT,
AT LEAST AN
ATTRIBUTION--

LOIS?

Mhm.

PERRY.



YOU'RE SAYING MON-EL'S DEATH WAS **FAKED** IN ORDER TO GENERATE **ANTI-KRYPTONIAN** HYSTERIA AND PROPAGANDA TO FURTHER SOME GOVERNMENT AGENDA.

THAT THE METROPOLIS THREE WERE **FRAMED**, AND THAT **REACTRON**--A KNOWN KILLER-- WAS EMPLOYED BY YOUR FATHER TO PERPETUATE THIS HOAX."

EMPLOYED, IN ESSENCE, BY THE U.S. ARMY.

"SEE THE 'HUNT FOR REACTRON' STORY."
--Idelfron

I KNOW WHAT I WROTE.

WHO'D YOU **SHOW THIS TO?** WHO ELSE **KNEW YOU WERE WORKING ON IT?**

WHAT? LANA, THAT'S IT, AND SHE'D NEVER--

IT **LEAKED**, LOIS, SOMEONE, SOMEHOW, IT GOT OUT.

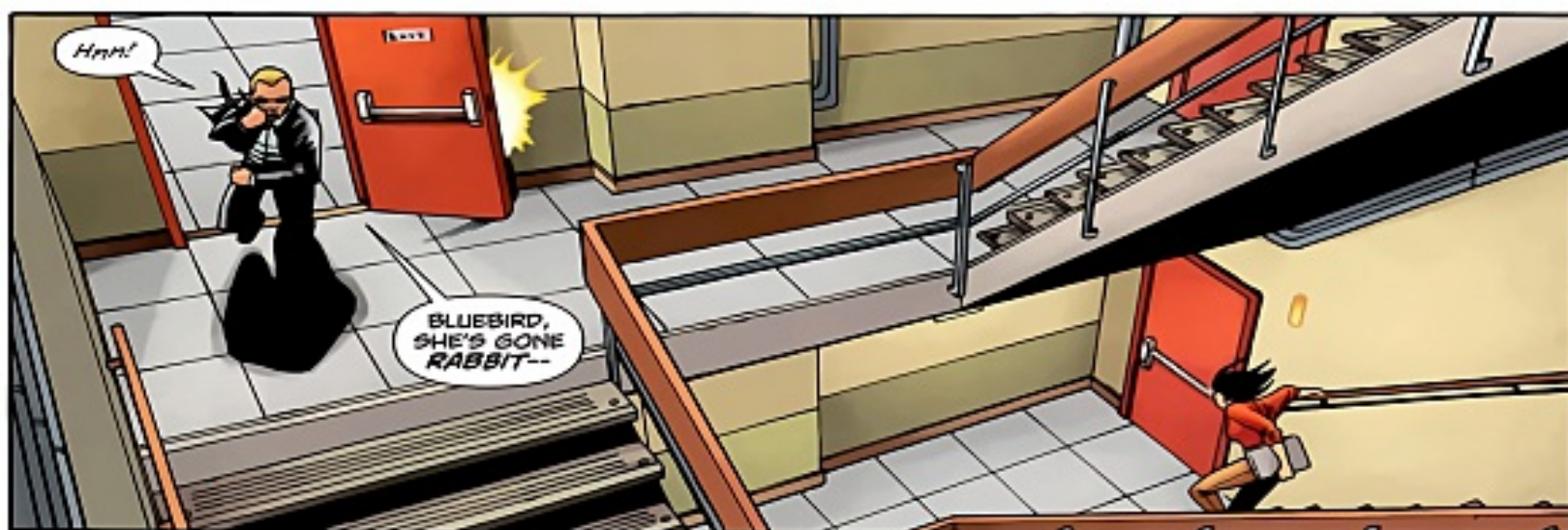
I JUST GOT A CALL FROM A FRIEND AT D.O.D.-- THE ARMY IS **ACCUSING YOU OF COLLABORATION**, THEY'RE SAYING YOU **HARBORED FLAMEBIRD AND NIGHTWINGS**.

THEY'RE **ACCUSING YOU OF TREASON**.

YOU NEED TO GET **OUT** OF HERE, NOW.







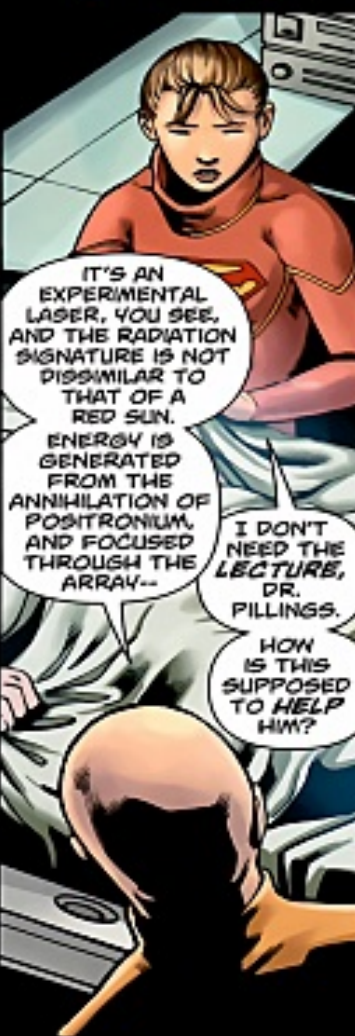
IT IS AN OLD STORY.

...HURTHH...

THIS IS KILLING HIM!

QUITE PROBABLY, GIVEN LONG ENOUGH EXPOSURE.

TO KRYPTONIANS OF MY GENERATION, IT IS A BEDTIME TALE FOR IMAGINATIVE CHILDREN.



IT'S AN EXPERIMENTAL LASER, YOU SEE, AND THE RADIATION SIGNATURE IS NOT DISSIMILAR TO THAT OF A RED SUN. ENERGY IS GENERATED FROM THE ANNIHILATION OF POSITRONIUM, AND FOCUSED THROUGH THE ARRAY--

I DON'T NEED THE LECTURE, DR. PILLINGS.

HOW IS THIS SUPPOSED TO HELP HIM?



IT MAY NOT, MY DEAR. YOU KRYPTONIANS ARE A HARDY BREED.

THE LASER ARRAY HAS BEEN ACTIVE FOR NEARLY AN HOUR, AND YET WE'VE ONLY MANAGED TO ACQUIRE 49.3% OF WHAT WE NEED.

STILL, THE DATA IS PROMISING.



TOTEMIC SPIRITS IN SERVICE TO A HIGHER BEING.

GOOD. I'D HATE TO THINK YOU WERE TORTURING HIM FOR NO GOOD REASON.

I ASSURE YOU, MY INTENT IS NOT TO HARM YOUR FRIEND.

BUT, IF YOU'LL PARDON THE EXPRESSION, THIS IS NOT AN EXACT SCIENCE.



IF WE KEEP THE REACTORS RUNNING LIKE THIS, DR. PILLINGS, WE'RE GOING TO ATTRACT ATTENTION. OFFICIAL ATTENTION.

WHAT'S OUR STATUS?

I'M UPLOADING SOME PRELIMINARY SCHEMATICS TO YOU NOW, DR. HOSHI.

THE DOOMED ROMANCE OF THE NIGHTWING AND THE FLAMEBIRD.

I BELIEVE I'VE WORKED UP A DESIGN THAT MAY FUNCTION ADEQUATELY, THOUGH IT REQUIRES SOME... PROBLEMATIC MATERIALS.



...THAT'S AN UNDERSTATEMENT. IF WE DO THIS, WE'LL HAVE LANE'S PEOPLE ALL OVER US FOR SURE.

THE NIGHTWING AND THE FLAMEBIRD ARE REAL.

ALL
RIGHT.

DO IT.
I'LL TRY
TO BUY YOU
TIME.

DO
WHAT?

CUT TO
THE CHASE.

**THEY
EXIST.**

IF WE
RAMP UP THE
LASER'S POWER,
WE MAY BE ABLE
TO REACH OUR
REQUIRED
THRESHOLD
IN TIME.

IN
THEORY.

**THEY HAVE
POWER.**

CHRIS!
DOCTOR,
ENOUGH,
PLEASE!

NNNNGGH.

ALL THAT REMAINS IS
TO FIND THE KEY THAT
WILL FREE THAT POWER,
AND THE PROPER
HARNESS WITH WHICH
TO YOKE IT TO MY WILL.

**PLEASE,
DOCTOR--**

(--I SAID--)





—I WILL NOT...



...THE...

...YOU...

THE HUMANS DO SAY THAT
LOVE MAKES ONE BLIND.

AND YOU HAVE BEEN VERY
BLIND, HAVEN'T YOU, MY DEAR?

THE HUMANS DO SAY THAT
LOVE MAKES ONE BLIND.

AND YOU HAVE BEEN VERY
BLIND, HAVEN'T YOU, MY DEAR?











THAT'S MY GIRL.

AS "PILLINGS," I TAKE A FEW HOURS, OSTENSIBLY STUDYING THE RESULTS OF THE LASER EXPERIMENT.

OH, IT STINGS.

UNDERSTANDABLE.

THE UNIQUE RADIATION SIGNATURE IN YOUR CELLS HAS HAD A DESTRUCTIVE EFFECT, ONE THAT THE RESTORATIVE EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO STELLAR RADIATION HAS NOT OUTPACED.

BUT THE SOLUTION IS LITTLE MORE THAN A FEAT OF SIMPLE ENGINEERING.

SO, WITH DR. HOSHI'S UNIQUE ABILITIES, WE'LL BE JUMPSTARTING THAT EXPOSURE.

THE DEVICE ON YOUR ARM FOCUSES THE ENERGY COLLECTED FROM DR. HOSHI'S... OUTPUT.

A SIMPLE CONDUCTOR-- IN THIS CASE A NEEDLE COMPOSED OF KRYPTONIAN SUNSTONE--DUMPS THE FLOW INTO YOUR BLOOD CELLS.

SHE'S MARGINALLY MORE INTELLIGENT THAN THE AVERAGE HUMAN, AND HER ABILITIES COULD PROVE AN IRRITANT.

ANOTHER HOUR TO COBBLE TOGETHER THE NECESSARY COMPONENTS AND KEEP HOSHI OCCUPIED.

IN SHORT, WE'LL BE OVERCLOCKING YOUR BODY'S ABILITY TO PROCESS YELLOW SUN RADIATION, AND HOPING IT REPAIRS ITSELF FASTER THAN THE CELLS ARE BREAKING DOWN.

THAT'S THE THEORY, ANYWAY.

AND WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME. LANE'S PEOPLE ARE FUNNY ABOUT ACCESS TO KRYPTONIAN TECH.

SO LET'S DO THIS.



MIRACLES COME IN SO MANY DIFFERENT FORMS.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF A SICK, ELDERLY BODY INTO A YOUNG, VIBRANT ONE.

WOW.

INDEED. YOU'RE QUITE FORTUNATE, YOUNG MAN.

THIS DEVICE SHOULD KEEP YOUR CELLS INFUSED WITH ENOUGH ENERGY TO PREVENT ANY MORE INCIDENTS OF BURST AGING.

THE METAMORPHOSIS FROM VALIANT HERO TO TERRIFIED LOVER--

CHRIS!

I THOUGHT I WAS LOSING YOU--

--TO SOMETHING THAT DEFIES DESCRIPTION.

BUT YOU DIDN'T LOSE HIM, DID YOU?

ISN'T THAT RIGHT, MY DEAR?

GENETIC MARKERS LOCATED

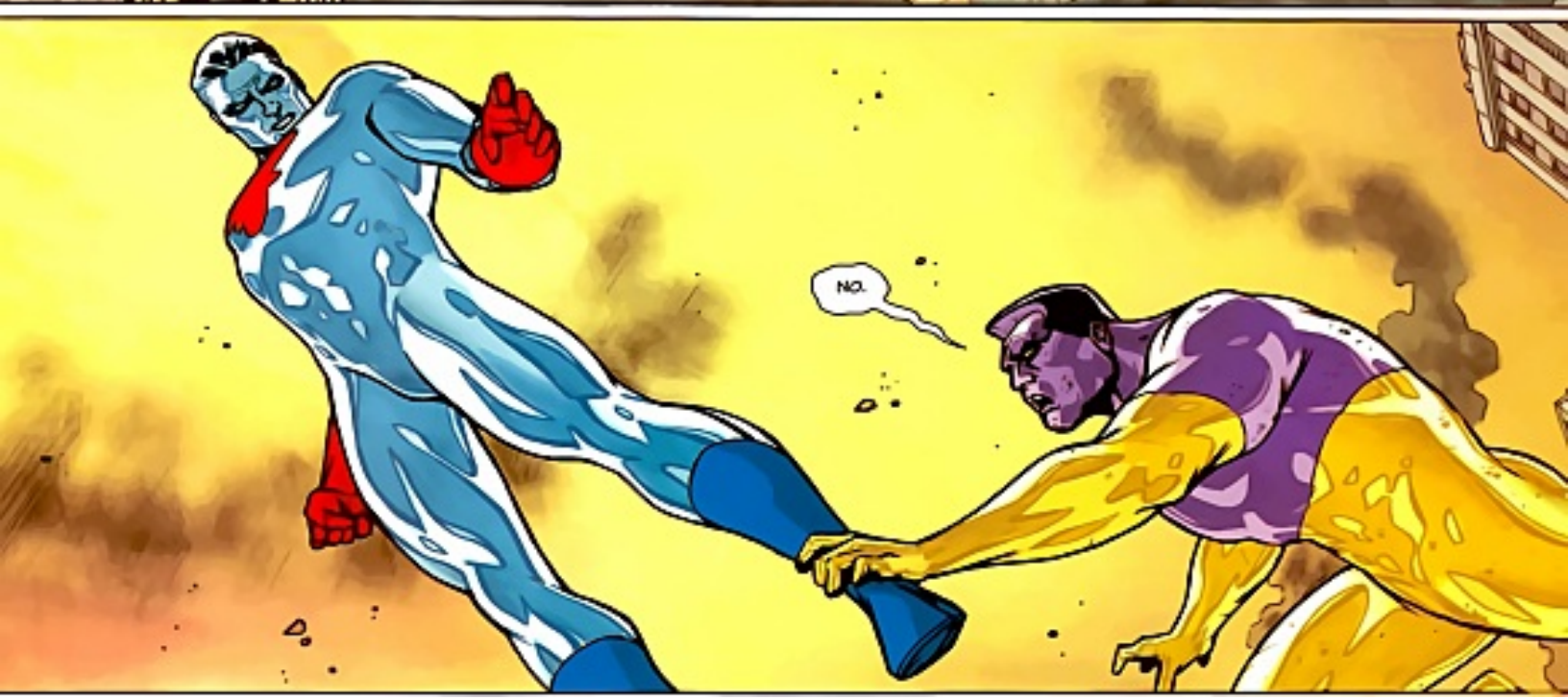
DNA SAMPLE OBTAINED.
ANALYSIS IN PROGRESS.

BECAUSE YOU HAVE FRIENDS HERE.

ONE SHOULD ALWAYS REMEMBER ONE'S FRIENDS.

TO BE CONTINUED!

AND NOW...
CAPTAIN ATOM





MY NAME'S
MON-EL. I'M
THE PROTECTOR OF
METROPOLIS WHILE
SUPERMAN IS
GONE.



"WHILE HE'S
GONE"?

YEAH,
I'VE *SWORN*
TO GUARD THIS CITY
FOR AS LONG AS
THERE'S BREATH
IN MY LUNGS.



DRAMATIC TURN
OF PHRASE, BUT
YOU GOT THE BIG
POWERS TO MATCH
THOSE BIG WORDS,
I NOTICED.

SUPERMAN'S.
PLUS, KRYPTONITE
IS JUST A BLOWING
GREEN ROCK
TO ME.



SO YOU'RE
BETTER?

IF I HAD
HIS HEART,
KNOWLEDGE, SPIRIT,
INTELLIGENCE AND
EXPERIENCE...



...NO. NOT
EVEN THEN.
BUT I'LL DO IN
A PINCH.

YEAH, I WAS IN
A PINCH AND YOU DID
JUST FINE. *LUCKY*
YOU COMING ALONG,
ACTUALLY.



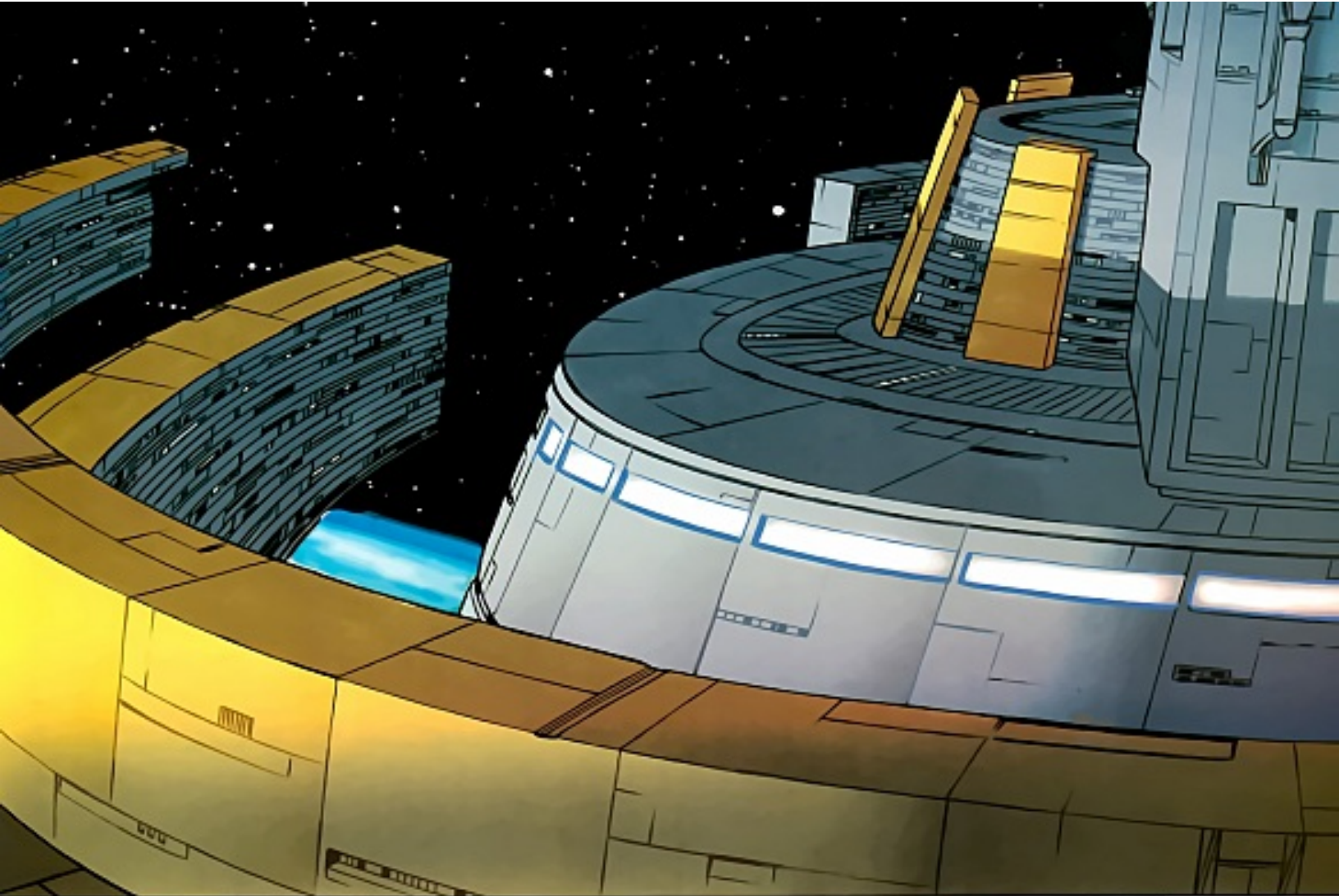
"...SOMEWHERE WE *CAN'T*
BE EASILY FOLLOWED."

CAPTAIN ATOM

CHAPTER SIX

JAMES ROBINSON-WRITER • CAFU-ARTIST
SANTIAGO AREAS-COLORIST • ROB LEIGH-LETTERER
WIL MOSS-ASST. EDITOR • MATT IDELSON-EDITOR







"...WE FOUGHT SUPERMAN AND BATMAN WHEN LEX LUTHOR WAS PRESIDENT AND BRANDED THEM PUBLIC ENEMIES."


YEAH, I WAS REMINDED OF THAT BY MAJOR FORCE. JUST FOUGHT HIM. HE'S STILL GOVERNMENT, I SEE.

THAT CREATURE GOES WHERE THE WIND BLOWS. HE'S BEEN A FRIEND TO THE MILITARY, AN ENEMY OF THE JUSTICE SOCIETY, AND BACK AGAIN.

ALL I KNOW IS THAT HE'S EVIL.



"I CAN EVEN SORT OF RECALL ANOTHER VERSION OF EARTH THAT I VISITED."



SO DO PEOPLE
THINK THE
SAME THING OF
ME NOW? THAT
I'M EVIL?

MY MEMORY
IS COMING BACK,
BUT IT'S
SELECTIVE.



"I REMEMBER
MY EARLY DAYS AS
CAPTAIN ATOM."



"I REMEMBER
ADVENTURES."

"PEOPLE."

"WOMEN
I'VE LOVED."



BUT
THE OTHER
TIMES...

...WHEN I WASN'T
CAPTAIN ATOM OR
NATHANIEL ADAM...

"...WHEN I WAS
MONARCH."



"I CAN'T REMEMBER
MUCH... THANK
GOD... ALL THE EVIL
AND PAIN AND DEATH
THAT I CAUSED."



YEAH, I WISH
WE COULD SAY WE
DIDN'T REMEMBER,
CAPTAIN...



...BUT
WE DO!

YOU'RE
A DANGER TO
THE WORLD...

...A FUGITIVE
FROM THE U.S.
MILITARY.

AND IN
DIRE NEED OF
JUSTICE!

TO BE
CONTINUED...



HAPPY LATE HALLOWEEN, DC NATION!

Here's a peek at how some of the DC staff spent the day....



DC NATION

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